

Managing Stress

The signs and symptoms of a stress reaction may last a few days, a few weeks, or a few months and occasionally longer depending on the severity of the traumatic event. With understanding and support from families and friends the stress reactions usually pass more quickly. Occasionally the traumatic event/stressor may be so painful that professional assistance from a counselor may be necessary. This does not imply craziness or weakness. It simply indicates that the particular event/stressor was just too powerful for the person to manage by themselves.

Here are some common signs and signals of a stress reaction:

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Mental</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Behavioral</u>
-Upset stomach	-Trouble concentrating	-Grumpy	-Excessive drinking
-Trouble sleeping	-Difficulty making decisions	-Tense	-Poor eating habits
-Accident and injuries	-Forgetfulness	-Impatient	-Driving too fast
-Tight chest and throat	-Scary thoughts	-Hostile	-Drug use
-Backaches	-Making errors	-Easily upset	-Getting into arguments
-Constipation	-Repetitive thoughts	-No pleasure in pastimes	-Becoming a loner
-Headaches		-Lonely	-Working too much
-Exhaustion		-Depressed	-Criticizing other a lot

Helpful Coping tools

- Adjust your attitude
 - You can often reduce stress by changing how you react to it
 - Practice positive self-talk. Telling yourself “I can meet the Challenge...”
 - Avoid negative self-talk. Thoughts such as, “I can’t, or I have to be perfect.”
 - Be prepared. Mentally rehearse a stressful situation.
 - Make the switch to positive thinking. “I can do it.”
- Build a support System
 - Dealing with stress is easier if you have support. Reach out to others.
 - Build a strong network of people in your current environment.
 - Air your feelings before they build up. No one knows how you feel unless you tell them.
- Physical activity